

COAL MINE DUST RULES MUST BE WITHDRAWN

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker. It is with alarm that today members of the United Mine Workers of America rally on the steps of the State Capitol in Charleston, West Virginia, to protest one of the greatest threats to their health and safety in many years.

It is unfortunate, but true, that this threat comes from their own Federal Government, in the form of proposed rules issued by the Mine Health and Safety Administration (MSHA) that would increase fourfold the amount of dust levels permitted in underground coal mines.

As a May 6, 2003, editorial in the Beckley, West Virginia, Register Herald pointed out, a recent study conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and MSHA already casts doubt on the efficacy of existing coal mine dust compliance rules. The editorial points out that about 1,000 miners still die a year from the dreaded black lung disease which is contracted as a result of sustained contact with coal mine dust. And as the editorial notes: "We need to dig for answers quickly, so the next century of coal mining can be accomplished without the threat of black lung disease." Following my remarks I ask that the editorial be printed in its entirety.

Yet, despite this study and a whole host of other evidence, MSHA on March 6th of this year published two proposed rules which would dramatically harm the health of our Nation's coal miners and conflict with both the letter and intent of the landmark Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969.

This week, in a letter I wrote to Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, I asked that these proposed rules be immediately withdrawn. There is no credible reason why any alleged "mine health" regulation should allow permissible dust levels to increase from the current 2 milligrams/cubic meter standards to 8 milligrams as would be possible under the March 6th dust rules.

The Labor Department and its agency, MSHA, should heed the call of the Register Herald editorial and take actions to eliminate the threat of black lung disease rather than allow increased dust levels in the Nation's coal mines.

BLACK LUNG: 30 YEARS AFTER PROTECTIONS, DISEASE AND QUESTIONS REMAIN

Under the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, miners are to be exposed to no more than 2 milligrams of coal dust per cubic meter of air over eight hours—equal to a debris speck the size of a pinhead.

These federal coal-dust controls were designed to protect miners so black lung no longer would be an occupational hazard.

So, 30 years later, have these restraints been successful in halting a disease that reduces the ability to breathe and leads to heart failure?

At first glance, that seems to be the case. But statistics sometimes can be as clear as mud.

According to the study conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration, black lung disease continues to develop in miners who have worked their entire careers under current, and supposedly acceptable, coal dust limits.

X-rays show that rates among miners with 20 years or less in the mines produce "no clear trend," the study said. Black lung "continues to occur among working coal miners, even among those first employed after the current federal exposure limit became effective" in 1972.

Even among surface miners, X-rays found that black lung occurred in 1.9 percent of cases.

Surface miners "had been thought not to have been at much risk because they work out in the open," noted Dr. E. Lee Petsonk, one of the study's authors and senior medical officer in the surveillance branch at the health institute's Division of Respiratory Disease Studies in Morgantown. "It is a finding of concern."

The \$64,000 question, then, is a simple "why?" Why do new cases of black lung disease continue to develop in miners when coal-dust limits established to protect miners have been in effect for more than 30 years?

Are the dust levels being complied with? Are the rules still not stringent enough? And why are surface miners developing black lung?

Answering these questions is vital, because about 1,000 miners die from black lung each year. Many of those are West Virginia miners.

Coal, we pointed out in this space yesterday, will be around for a while. By a most conservative estimate, there are at least 100 years of coal deposits still to mine.

We need to dig for answers quickly, so the next century of coal mining can be accomplished without the threat of black lung disease.

GIRL SCOUT TROOP 378

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Heart of Florida Girl Scout Troop 378 in Citrus County, FL for their service to the community and to the people of my district.

The troop recently learned about the importance of voting and about the functions of American government as part of the "I-Count" Voter Education program and each Troop Member participating in the program received a patch upon completion.

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, those in the Girl Scout program measure their accomplishments and award merit based on the number of patches they accumulate. As part of earning this patch, the girls studied intently and listened to a speech I gave about the importance of voting—and how one vote can be the deciding factor in some instances.

It was when I spoke to the girls and had the chance to meet them and hear about all they had done in the community that I realized the tremendous amount of work they had done and their intense dedication to the Girl Scout program.

Mr. Speaker, let me briefly mention just a few of the things this group of girls has done throughout their years of involvement with this program.

As Daisies the girls learned to do crafts and learned the Girl Scout promise. They went on campouts, marched in parades and sang at Surry Place Nursing home.

As Brownies, the troop went to nursing homes to sing, volunteered at various events and continued to appear in local parades.

As Juniors, they collected old, unused cell phones to benefit battered women, helped at the local "Relay for Life," which benefits the American Cancer Society, and presented the local volunteer firefighters with cookies to thank them for their work in the community.

Now that the girls are Cadets they are still collecting cell phones and will be continuing their involvement in the "Relay for Life" program. This past Holiday Season they "Gift Adopted" a local under-privileged girl, and donated money and new gifts to make her Christmas brighter.

Currently they are saving the proceeds from the sale of their Girl Scout cookies for a trip to Savannah, GA to see where Juliette Gordon Low, the Girl Scout founder, was born.

Amber Auth, Nicole Bruno, Melissa Fonczak, Emily Stanton, Rebecca Rose, Kimberly Carbonari, Rebecca Morse, along with troop leader Mimi Rose and assistant troop leader Nora Auth, deserve to be commended for their service and dedication. I am proud to have them as my constituents and am honored to be their representation in Congress.

TRIBUTE TO MS. KATHERINE HALLBERG CELEBRATING THE FIRST PLACE WINNER OF THE 14TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL ART COMPETITION, AN ARTISTIC DISCOVERY

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Katherine Hallberg from Woodland Hills School District. Katherine is the top winner of the 2003 14th Congressional District High School Art Competition, An Artistic Discovery.

Katherine's acrylic painting entitled "Technicolor Portrait" was chosen from an outstanding collection of entries. Katherine is a young woman of considerable talent and is sure to have many successes in her future. The judges were very impressed by her use of light and shadow.

I look forward to seeing Katherine's artwork displayed in the U.S. Capitol building along with the artwork of the other competition winners from across the country. I am pleased to be associated with Katherine's artistic talents.

Congratulations Katherine. I wish you all the best of luck in the future.

REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, three years ago, Mr. Chen Shui-bian was democratically elected President of the Republic of China on Taiwan. His election by the people of that island showed the world that democracy was alive and well and could easily thrive in a Chinese society like Taiwan.

During the last three years, President Chen and the people of Taiwan continue the practice of democracy in their country. Today Taiwan has free elections at every level, a free press, and the highest regard for human rights. Taiwan has set a good example for neighboring Asian nations, and other countries around the world, to follow.

President Chen has, on many occasions, stressed that Taiwan and neighboring countries must work together to discuss issues of mutual interests. Any progress toward improved relationships between nations along the Pacific Rim must ensure the interests of the 23 million people living in the Republic of China.

I have enjoyed working with Taiwan's Representative in Washington, Ambassador C.J. Chen. He and his aides do a good job of informing Congress of developments in Taiwan.

As the people of Taiwan prepare to celebrate their president's third anniversary in office, I hope Taiwan will find success in gaining observer status at the World Health Organization this May. As the outbreak of SARS threatens Asia and the world, Taiwan should be included in World Health Organization activities.

Secretary of State Colin Powell recently said, "infectious disease . . . requires an effective and coordinated response at local, national and international levels." SARS is a harsh reminder to the world that diseases know no border, and we must have an effective international coalition to combat SARS, and other infectious diseases we have yet to discover.

Taiwan has been affected by SARS; it is only right to include them in the global campaign against it.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the people of Taiwan for their continuing experiment with democracy. As we have noted before: in a democracy, it is not the first election that defines a democracy . . . it is all those that follow.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS SECURITY ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 866, the Wastewater Treatment Works Security Act of 2003, and I commend Chairman YOUNG for sponsoring this important legislation. H.R. 866 authorizes the EPA Administrator to issue grants for vulnerability assessments and security enhancements at our publicly owned treatment works facilities. In addition, the legislation calls on the Administrator to provide much needed technical assistance regarding security measures that can be made to our smaller publicly owned treatment works facilities, that is facilities that serve less than 20,000 people. Lastly, the bill provides critical funding for the improvement of the methodologies and tools used to carry out wastewater vulnerability assessments.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring that our wastewater treatment facilities are properly protected and secure is a crucial aspect of enhancing our Homeland Security. A terrorist attack on a

public treatment facility could be devastating. I commend Chairman YOUNG for his hard work on this legislation, and his efforts to draw attention to the need to improve the security of wastewater treatment facilities.

HONORING CENTER HIGH SCHOOL'S "TOP 10" SENIORS

HON. DOUG OSE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the talents and efforts of Center High School's "Top Ten" Academic Seniors for the 2002–2003 school year. These students have an unweighted, cumulative grade point average of between 3.88 and 4.0. These outstanding students have been accepted at the University of California—Los Angeles, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, UC San Diego, UC Berkeley, University of the Pacific, Stanford, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and Brigham Young University.

Each of these students were honored at a scholarship dinner on Monday, April 28, 2003, where they were each presented with \$200 scholarships made possible by community donations, and publicly recognized for their academic achievements.

I am very proud of these young men and woman. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Valerie Vinco, Navneet Riar, Tara Dougherty, Natalie Ramirez, Erin Baccay, Dieu-Huyen Nguyen, Adam Luber, Maybelline Disuanco, Kimberly Johnson, and Sabre Shin.

WISCONSIN THANKS JUSTICE WILLIAM BABLITCH FOR 35 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE STATE

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to honor my friend and former colleague, Justice William A. Bablitch, as he celebrates 35 years of service to the people of Wisconsin.

Long known as a vigilant champion of the underprivileged, Justice Bablitch began serving others early in life. At the age of twenty-two, he traveled to Liberia in Western Africa with the Peace Corps, and spent his tour teaching young pupils in a local elementary school. Struck by the conditions that his students endured daily, he returned to his home state impassioned to work on behalf of the public and to study law at the University of Wisconsin.

After receiving his Juris Doctorate in 1968, the Justice spent three years as a District Attorney, during the tumultuous times of the student-led Vietnam protests. By working with the administration of the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point and the Sheriff's Department of Stevens Point, he helped ensure that in the wake of the Kent State Massacre violence or bloodshed did not erupt at UWSP.

In 1973, Bill turned his talents to representing the people of Portage County in the Wisconsin State Senate where I had the es-

teemed pleasure of serving with him. A strong advocate for civil and human rights, Senator Bablitch pushed for legislation reform in discrimination, sexual assault, child abuse, and divorce law. His role as majority leader paved the way for public accessibility to Wisconsin government by creation of Wisconsin's Open Meeting and campaign reform laws.

Always a defender of social justice, Justice Bablitch's career has been highlighted by his twenty years in the Wisconsin Supreme Court where he has fought for the protection of consumers, the environment, and a patient's right to know.

While away from the office, Bill spends time with his wife, Anne, daughter, Bulleh, and granddaughters, Layteh and Nancy, at his homes in Northern Wisconsin and Hawaii. Whether fly-fishing with family and friends or cooking a meal for them, he has filled the lives of those around him with laughter and happiness.

Justice William Bablitch's retirement is certainly well deserved, but his leadership and passion for serving the best interests of Wisconsin citizens will be truly missed. Congratulations, my friend.

IN RECOGNITION OF LOUISE DANKBERG ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2003

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Louise Dankberg on the occasion of her retirement. Ms. Dankberg is an incomparable leader who has consistently contributed to our community for over three decades in notable ways.

After 34 years, serving in a variety of positions, Ms. Dankberg is retiring from the New York State Department of Labor. Among her many achievements during her tenure, Ms. Dankberg has served as Loaned Executive to State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA) of United Way, where she raised over \$750,000 in six campaigns in 51 state agencies. As Executive Administrative Assistant to the New York City Director, Ms. Dankberg was responsible for major decisions of staff changes and successfully developed communications between branch offices and district managers. She also supervised 125 professional and support staff while serving as Job Service Supervisor. In addition, Ms. Dankberg acted to resolve issues, train new staff, and corresponded on behalf of the Governor and Commissioner of Labor in her role as Unemployment Insurance Supervisor of Telephone Call Center.

Through a variety of professional and civic activities, Ms. Dankberg has touched countless lives in the New York area. Ms. Dankberg has been very active within the New York State government. She has been the Female District Leader of the 74th Assembly District since 1993 and a New York State County Committee Member since 1973. She served as the Beth R. Cosnow Memorial Chairperson and as a New York State Committeewoman in 1993, and worked as a delegate to Supreme Court Judicial Conventions from 1971 to 1993. For over thirty years she has been a liaison with elected officials for the community